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## Paranoia - Who said that!?



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### Chapter 1 by StanG

I'm not, absolutely am not, paranoid.

But is it the same for you, whenever you look in its direction, either full faced or sideways glance?

Even, perhaps, sometimes while your mind wanders through meadows glistening in Autumn sunshine while silken spider webs drift lightly and lazily on a hint of breeze, even then you catch a glimpse and it stops.

Why does it do that? To what end?

I don't know how much longer this can go on. I am, after all, supposed to be in charge, here.

It belongs to me. It is mine. I should not be afraid.

I control its every move - it is programmed to obey my command.

But now and then, when I check on its progress... just to be sure everything is in order, you

understand... I'm only doing it for its assured continuation and my complete satisfaction in its achievement...

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I mean, it's not like I'm scared of my washing machine. Not at all. I admit that the ghostly blue light coming from its interior in the middle of the night is slightly disconcerting. And the way it rumbles, the way it moves side to side, slowly inching towards the wall and then away again...

What is it planning?

You might say, "Oh, forget about it. You're just being paranoid."

I hate that word. It insinuates that I'm just scared, that if I stopped thinking about the... thinking about the problem, it would go away. That's not the case. I can't forget about it. I can never forget about it. Never.

My eyes have started hurting. They twitch, and it's getting harder and harder to blink slowly. I need to sleep. But I can't, not when it's only a few rooms away. It never stops when I'm not there. I have to be there. I have to watch it. Maybe this is its plan, to get me so tired I can no longer keep an eye on it. But then what?

By now, I know every scratch on it, every little dent and every curve of the plastic casing. But it's not enough. I need to know more. I need to know why it does this to me.

I need to know why.

### Chapter 3 by Nate Gardner



*Out of sight, out of mind.*

I hate that expression. I hate it almost as much as I hate the p-word. Because I can never stop seeing it. Even when I close my eyes, the image is there, imprinted on the back of my lids.

That is why I sit cross legged in front of it. Staring. I programmed you, and you turned against me. You betrayed me.

Spin, Rinse, Spin, Rinse, Spin Rinse Spin RinseSpin RinseSpinSpinRinseSpinSpin

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I think about how these cycles are like my hands being washed and rinses in an effort to wash, but it only increases the c

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In a fleeting moment of clarity, I remember that I do not know what is inside my washing machine. What is this machine washing? Have I bothered to look inside it?

Have I bothered to look inside my mind?

## Chapter 4 by StanG



The hushed sighing of the water as it sloshes within the machine brings some sense of tranquility and eases the tremblings of my mind while it lulls me into a false sense of security.

Am I being paranoid, after all?

What is happening with my mind, that I believe my washing machine is behaving in this way? Am I going crazy? This would perhaps account for these thoughts and feelings, but not the silence that ensues whenever I look towards my washer.

The lack of sleep, the twitching eye - was that movement I caught from my peripheral vision? I face the terrifying appliance to catch it in the act, but it suddenly falls silent, teasing me once again with its calm blue light. I must get away from this thing, before I lose my mind completely.

As soon as I walk away, a low rumbling begins as the machine whirls into action once more and I decide that a cup of coffee might be just the break I need. But something... some whisper of a voice from within says, "Turn around."

No. No, I'm stronger than that. "Turn around." I will not, most definitely will NOT turn around. It is, after all, under my control, this scarred, dented apparatus. I will not crack, I will not bend. I will not succumb to the terrors forcing themselves from deep within the unwashed depths of my psyche. "Turn around."

As I creep towards my washing machine, intent on looking within, I notice with advancing terror that it is no longer housed beneath the counter where it had been installed.

"Why don't you sit a while longer by my side?"

My scream fills the apartment. See more of Story Wars

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